

RESOURCES

NATURE, HISTORY AND HORTICULTURE IN FAIRFAX COUNTY

VOLUME 4, NO. 4 FALL 2004

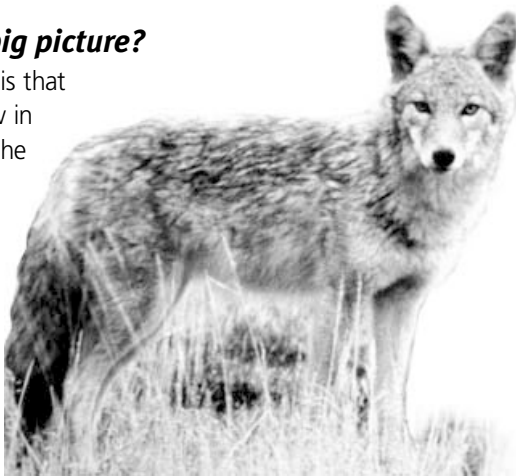
Coyotes in Fairfax County — *Fact or Fiction*

Coyotes play a big role in American culture, whether they are wreaking havoc in Native American folk tales or baying at the moon in the movies. In mythology, coyotes are ever the clever mischief-maker, a reputation earned from their real-life stealth, swiftness and adaptability.

There has been some press lately about coyotes in the county. But what's the real story? Is it just a lot of hype? ResOURces spoke with Fairfax County Police Department wildlife biologist Earl Hodnett to straighten out some of myths about surrounding our very own county coyotes. Still rare and with a small population, coyotes aren't more or less a concern than any other wildlife we have in the county, be it bears, raccoons, deer or snakes.

What's the big picture?

The big picture is that coyotes are now in every region of the nation, except maybe Hawaii. They're hardly unique to this area. Everybody's got them.



Eastern coyotes (*Canis latrans*) are brownish-gray with an average weight of 35 pounds.

Are there benefits to having coyotes?

The good news for Fairfax County is that coyotes will help normalize two animal populations that have become overgrown due to the lack of a natural predator, and have presented a nuisance problem for citizens. These are rats and Canada geese.

Coyotes will help clean up the high rat population and other rodents as well, which is a welcome activity. In the case of Canada geese, coyotes like eating goose eggs (and occasionally a goose dinner), which should help to mitigate the big soiling problem the county has when geese overrun sports fields, parks, school grounds and lawns.

Are we likely to see a coyote?

Probably not. Coyotes are smart, secretive and nocturnal. They also tend to avoid humans.

What do they look like?

The Eastern coyote is different from the Western coyote. They're bigger for one thing, having cross-bred over recent decades with wolves. They're brownish-gray with an average weight of about 35 pounds. Although you might hear one, they are not as vocal as their Western cousins.

What do you do if you actually spot one?

Nothing. The county knows they're here so you shouldn't do anything more than you would if you saw a skunk or raccoon. Often, people call saying they've seen a coyote when in fact, they've seen a gray fox or a mangy red fox. It's rare to see one.

Should we be concerned?

Not really. They're part of our wildlife now. Coyotes, just like in the old Western movies, are primarily a concern to farmers. For Fairfax County citizens, the big concern is letting out pets at night — cats or small dogs, which could be killed if they wander into coyote territory.

It's important not to leave food sources out at night, like dog food or food on compost piles, and be sure to secure garbage can lids.

Can coyotes be scared off?

Yes. Just yell at them. Coyotes generally aren't confrontational and would rather avoid humans and run away than get into a fight, although they might get into a tug-of-war if you tried to grab away their catch.

However, if a coyote is behaving abnormally or aggressively, like a rabid dog, then call the county police non-emergency number —703-691-213—and they will dispatch an animal control officer.

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Burke Lake Park
7315 Ox Road, Fairfax Station
Call 703-323-6600

Colvin Run Mill
10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls
Call 703-759-2771

Ellanor C. Lawrence Park
5040 Walney Road, Chantilly
Call 703-631-0013

Frying Pan Park
2709 West Ox Road, Herndon
Call 703-437-9101

Green Spring Gardens Park
4603 Green Spring Rd., Alexandria
Call 703-642-5173

Hidden Oaks Nature Center
7701 Royce Street, Annandale
Call 703-941-1065

Hidden Pond Nature Center
8511 Greeley Blvd., Springfield
Call 703-451-9588

Huntley Meadows Park
3701 Lockheed Blvd., Alexandria
Call 703-768-2525

Lake Accotink Park
7500 Accotink Park Rd., Springfield
Call 703-569-3464

Lake Fairfax Park
1400 Lake Fairfax Drive, Reston
Call 703-471-5414

Riverbend Park
8700 Potomac Hills Street
Great Falls
Call 703-759-9018

Sully Historic Site
Sully Road, Chantilly
Call 703-437-1794

*Need directions or
more information?*

VISIT
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks

Equal Access/ Special Accommodations

The Fairfax County Park Authority is committed to equal access in all programs and services. Special accommodations will be provided upon request. Please call the ADA/Access coordinator at **703-324-8563**, at least 10 working days in advance of the date services are needed.

ADA/Access Coordinator
703-324-8563
TTY 703-803-3354
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/ada.htm



War of 1812 Muster at Sully Historic Site Saturday, October 23rd from noon to 4pm

In the 18th and 19th centuries, musters were a time of recruitment and training for the Army and Navy and socializing for civilians. At Sully's Muster, drill with troops and learn about early military life, including the role of African Americans. Dance to period tunes and sing along with Ships Company Chanteymen. Play outdoor games and see picnic foods prepared in the open hearth kitchen. Rain or shine. House tour included. (\$6 adult, \$4 senior & child.)

Evening Camp and House Tours 6 to 8pm

Tour the 1812 military camps and the home of Richard Bland Lee by lantern light, including evening live music and period gaming enjoyed by both the military and civilians during the Federal period. (\$6 adult, \$4 senior & child. Combination ticket for both day and evening programs: \$8 adult, \$6 senior & child.)

LECTURE

Watershed Ecology: Studying the Effects of Land and Water on Each Other

HUNTLEY MEADOWS VISITOR CENTER,
Wednesday, October 20th, 7:30 to 8:30pm, \$3
Reservations Required. 703-768-2525

We all live in a watershed, which is an area of land that drains into a common body of water, such as a wetland, lake, river or bay. Join Laura Grape, ecologist with the Fairfax County Stormwater Planning Division, in discussing the county initiatives that study the effects of urban and suburban life on local and downstream water quality. Also, learn how citizens can get involved in the Countywide Watershed Planning effort by the Stormwater Planning Division's Watershed Assessment and Planning Branch.

What's RMD?

RMD stands for Resource Management Division. It is the part of the Park Authority responsible for natural, historical and horticultural resources.

Park Authority Pros Share their Expertise

Pros from the Resource Management Division of the Fairfax County Park Authority are in high demand when it comes to national and statewide meetings and conventions. Heather Melchior, manager for Natural Resource Protection; Elizabeth Crowell, manager for Cultural Resource Protection; and Michael McDonnell, site manager for Riverbend; recently led sessions at the annual Virginia Recreation and Parks Society convention. Jeannie Niccolls of Historic Collections lent her expertise to colleagues at the Virginia Museum Fundamentals Forum for Small and Emerging Museums.

Unusual Holiday Arrangements

GREEN SPRING GARDENS PARK
Friday, November 5th,
1 to 3:30pm, \$12


Tired of decorating your holiday table with the same old cornucopia or pine-cone turkey? Let Chris Polychrones, noted floral designer, show you how to jazz up your holiday arrangements. Chris will delight you with an awesome demonstration of holiday designs. Maybe you'll be the lucky door prize winner! **703-642-5173**



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Visit **ResOURces** online at
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resources

 **ResOURces** is printed on 100% recycled paper.



Down By the Old Mill Stream

Close your eyes and let your senses take you back in time. The touch of straw poking through your clothes, the crackle of the bonfire, the ring of the dulcimer in your ears, fingers sticky with melted marshmallow. Frolic this autumn at Colvin Run Mill Historic Site. There's fun (for everybody!) down by the old mill stream. Call 703-759-2771 for more information.

Civil War Encampment

Sunday, September 19th,
noon to 4pm

Celebrate the return of September's cooler weather by meeting Civil War soldiers from the Virginia 49th Volunteer Infantry, visiting their encampment and watching as they drill and fire their authentic period guns. Free.



Scarecrow Making
Saturday, October 2nd, noon to 2pm;
Sunday, October 3, 1 to 3pm

In October, you can make a real scarecrow for your yard out of straw, old clothing and imagination. \$5 per scarecrow.

A Taste of Colvin Run Mill

Sunday, October 17, noon to 4pm

Sample delicious goods baked from cornmeal and wheat flour stone-ground right in the mill! Enjoy breads, muffins and other goodies washed down with fresh apple cider you press yourself. \$5 adult/\$3 children.

Hallowe'en Fun

October 24th, 2 to 4pm

Recommended for children of all ages.

Listen to spine-tingling and funny

Hallowe'en tales told by master storyteller Gary Lloyd. And what would be an afternoon around the campfire without melting s'mores over a bonfire? \$4.

Mill Run Dulcimer Band Concerts

Sunday, September 12th, and
October 10th, 2 to 4pm;
Saturday, November 20th, 7 to 9pm

A joy to the community, the delightful Mill Run Dulcimer Band has held concerts at Colvin Run Mill for nearly 25 years. Free.

Holiday Ornament Workshop

November 14th, 2 to 3:30pm

In November, begin your preparations for the upcoming festive season by making your own holiday ornaments. Leave one behind to decorate a tree at the mill. \$12 (Reservations required by November 1.)

Were You an Outdoors Kind of Kid?

When you were little, did you love running around outside wild and happy with your friends? Did you love exploring the woods, tuned in to the bugs, trees and animals? Did you love telling stories around the campfire about days of yore? Was that a resounding YES?

Then you may be a natural-born park volunteer and/or heritage interpreter. When you volunteer, you join hundreds of dedicated (and fun!) folks who share your passion for nature and Virginia's rich history. Call your local park listed on page 2, or call/email the following Volunteer Coordinators:

Volunteering

erin.chernisky@fairfaxcounty.gov
703-324-8750

Interpretive Services

mona.enquist-
johnston@fairfaxcounty.gov
703-324-8750

Archaeology and Collections Cultural Resource Protection

robert.wharton@fairfaxcounty.gov
703-534-3881

Master Gardeners Program

sandra.flowers@fairfaxcounty.gov
703-941-7987

Are You New to Fairfax County?

Discover our area's beautiful forests, gardens and historical sites. What better way to enjoy our county's rich history and natural resources? When you visit our county parks, you become part of them and begin your own family history in Northern Virginia.

Backyard Birding Through Fall and All Winter Long

By Lee Ann Kinzer, Volunteer

A survey conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reports that more than 50 million Americans watch birds. By considering the four elements emphasized in the National Wildlife Federation's Backyard Wildlife Habitat program — food, water, cover and a place to raise young — you can be assured of a variety of birds to watch, right from the windows of your home. Some of your visitors will be just that, visiting birds passing through on their long flights of migration, and others will become familiar, year-round residents.

Their needs aren't so different from yours. Birds just define their desires a little differently.

FOOD:

Bird feeders can supplement natural food sources, though principally only seed-eaters (or, in winter months, suet-eaters) will use feeders. Be sure to place feeders at least eight feet from trees or other squirrel launching pads, or use free-standing poles. Feeders will be busiest from late October through the winter, and it is important to remember that late spring, when natural food supplies are still low, is a critical time to continue offering food.

Bird feeders can be host to bacteria and parasites that can spread disease through the wild bird population if the feeders are not regularly cleaned and sanitized. Many homeowners are concerned about attracting the "wrong element" such as crows, starlings, squirrels or rats. Putting out a minimal amount of seed per day, using shelled seeds or certain types of seeds can alleviate the problem. Spillage and the aroma from discarded shells is often the cause for attracting unwanted creatures. Providing just water can bring in some birds, help them out and eliminate the nuisance animal issue.



House sparrow (*Passer domesticus*).

WATER:

Birds will happily drink or bathe in ponds, streams, ditches, puddles or birdbaths. A birdbath should be set in a sunny clearing, ideally 15 feet from trees or shrubs where predators can lurk but with nearby branches to use as an escape route. Baths should be no more than 2-3 inches deep and should be rough surfaced. Birds will be especially attracted to baths or pools with dripping or running water.

In winter, when birds continue to need water, birdbath heaters are available, or you can break or melt the ice on baths or pools. Year-round, it is important that water is clean. *Note: Water additives that keep ice from forming negatively affect birds' feathers, which can prove deadly for them.*

SHELTER & A PLACE TO RAISE YOUNG:

Birdhouses, nesting platforms (preferred by some species) and winter roosting boxes can supplement garden plantings. Some 50 bird species will accept nestboxes, while about 35 will use them regularly. If you use birdhouses, remember that you will need to clean them out between broods and at the end of the nesting season.

Park Authority nature centers feature many birding programs and resources, which are listed in *Parktakes*, or, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/nature.htm. The Fairfax County Audubon Society can be reached by calling 703-256-6895 or visit www.fairfaxaudubon.org.



Red-bellied woodpecker (*Melanerpes carolinus*).

Here's a winter tip from naturalist Suzanne Holland at Hidden Oaks Nature Center

Birds can and do find food on their own in the fall and winter. The problem occurs when birds get trained to stay in one area due to a ready supply of food, and then the food is inconsistent and they have to scramble to find sustenance. So once started, feeding should continue through late spring. If a homeowner is away over winter, it's best not to start feeding in the late fall because birds can come to depend on the food source. Yet even offering fresh, clean water provides a much-needed service.

Add the Spirit of Virginia's Heritage to Your Next Event

It's time to take advantage of eight charming historic properties that are available to rent for corporate and nonprofit meetings and events, or family celebrations such as reunions, birthdays, weddings and anniversaries. They're right here in Fairfax County! What an excellent way to add flair and atmosphere to your next event or celebration.

Here are some highlights of the rental properties, all of which are formally recognized on state and/or national registries for the dynamic role they have played in our cultural heritage.

To rent an historic property or learn more, please call 703-938-8835 (TTY 703/750-2402), email hprs@fairfaxcounty.gov, or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/weddings.htm



CABELL'S MILL in Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, Chantilly

*A Rustic Sawmill that
Became VIP Central*

Cabell's Mill was probably built by Willoughby Newton between 1753 and 1759. Ellanor C. Lawrence, wife of *U.S. News and World Report* founder and publisher, David Lawrence, purchased the mill in 1944 and used it as a guesthouse for many Washington VIPs. The mill was also the site of Mr. Lawrence's weekly news broadcasts on the NBC network from 1945-1970. In 1971, under the terms of Mrs. Lawrence's will, the Fairfax County Park Authority received the mill, the miller's house and the surrounding woodlands (660 glorious acres) that now comprise Ellanor C. Lawrence Park.

DRANESVILLE TAVERN in Herndon

Watering Hole for Civil War Soldiers

Dranesville Tavern was built circa 1824 by Sanford Cockerille to serve travelers on the Leesburg-Alexandria and Georgetown Turnpikes.

During the Civil War, the area around the tavern served as one of the outermost picket points for the defense of Washington. Troops passed on their way to ford the Potomac and head north. In December 1861 the village was enveloped in battle between Union troops of Gen. McCall and the Confederate forces of Gen. J.E.B. Stuart. Skirmishes continued until March 1865. In 1865, the *Virginia Gazette* wrote that the tavern was "one of the best roadside inns in the state of Virginia."



STONE MANSION in South Alexandria *Home to an American Revolution Hero*



The Stone Mansion began life in circa 1780 as the manor home for the 400-acre plantation belonging to Revolutionary War naval officer Commodore Walter Brooke, grandson of George Mason II. Legend has it that when Brooke was eight years old, he went to sea as a cabin boy and later as a midshipman in the British Navy. Later in life he served as the master of the merchant ship *Martha*. In 1772, when George Washington needed goods for Mt. Vernon, Brooke traveled to London, selected the goods and brought them back on the *Martha*. Washington became a friend and the commodore was a frequent guest at Mt. Vernon.

During the American Revolution, Brooke was charged by then-Governor Patrick Henry to defend the Eastern Shore. Brooke served aboard the sloop *Liberty* in the Virginia Naval Forces until he was forced to retire due to gout. He then moved to his new home, naming it "Retirement."

WAKEFIELD CHAPEL in Annandale

*The Country Gothic
Dream of a Charis-
matic Minister*

At the end of the Civil War, Oliver G. and Mary Besley were living near the Ash Grove estate in



Tysons Corner. Desiring more land, Besley purchased a tract that included the future Wakefield Chapel parcel. In Annandale, Mary joined a Methodist Bible Study group. The group held their meetings in members' homes under the leadership of Rev. Elhanan W. Wakefield. Wakefield had served in the 2nd Massachusetts Cavalry and had been wounded and left for dead at Tom's Brook, Virginia. After the Civil War, he settled in the capital area and was noted for his evangelism and colorful personality.

In 1897, Oliver Besley donated the land and building materials for this country Gothic chapel, which Wakefield himself designed and helped to build.

Historic Property Rentals continued on page 9

Hidden Oaks Nature Center Top Ten

By Suzanne Holland, Naturalist

Happy Birthday, Hidden Oaks Nature Center! For 35 years, Hidden Oaks has delighted visitors of all ages with interactive exhibits, creative play areas and resources to explore the flora and fauna of Fairfax County. Minutes inside the Beltway, tucked away in the woodland of Annandale District Park, it was the county's first nature center and now, recently renovated, continues to be a much-loved destination for young families throughout the metropolitan area. Take a break and discover (or rediscover) Hidden Oaks Nature Center.

1 From Story Tree to Canopy

The new *Urban Woodlands: Habitats and Havens* exhibit features a 1600 square-foot discovery room highlighting the hundreds



Children love dressing up in animal costumes in the interactive A-corner.

of creatures that live in our woods, backyards, streams and beyond. Look at a squirrel the way a snake does, check out the insides of an earthworm or listen for the call of birds and insects in the canopy. Older children explore the world of science in our hands-on junior scientist corner, complete with lab coats! Young children love our "A-corner" area where they can dress up in animal costumes, create stories on an 8'x15' fabric wall and play with puppets, activity boxes and games.

2 Wildlife — Up Close and Personal

Live animal exhibits feature many of the reptiles and amphibians of Fairfax County including the area's only venomous snake species, the northern copperhead. Other seasonal exhibits include toads, tadpoles, and insects including praying mantises and monarch butterflies. An indoor and outdoor pond gives visitors a chance to peek at wildlife in a more natural environment.



The Urban Woodlands exhibit fascinates visitors young and old.

3 Explore the Discovery Classroom/Library

In addition to the woodland exhibit, Hidden Oaks boasts a large classroom. School groups, scouts, home school groups and families enjoy multi-media and interactive presentations on topics ranging from native animals to geology to habitats. When programs are not in session, the classroom library is open for reading and research. Naturalists guide young scientists in researching their book reports or science fair topics.

4 Climb a Tree & Put on a Show!

The classroom features the "tree house" — a floor-to-ceiling rock maple play structure. Puppets and a puppet stage on "the ground floor" invite children and their families to put on a show.

5 At Home with Wildlife

Found a snake or a spider in your backyard? Curious about a caterpillar? Visit the nature center naturalists for assistance in identifying the unusual visitors to your backyard. Visitors especially concerned about snakes can learn through photos and a live specimen how to identify a copperhead snake. Once visitors learn how to properly identify potentially hazardous wildlife, they can be more comfortable sharing their world with wildlife.

6 Woodpeckers & Orchids: Special Finds, Special Seasons

Visit the center often, especially in different seasons, to appreciate the wealth of flora and fauna that lives nearby. In the winter, six species of woodpeckers flock to the birdfeeders. In the spring, the pink lady's slipper, a wild orchid, blooms amongst the pines. Summer brings swallowtails and monarchs to the butterfly garden and in the fall, the warblers take a break from their migration.

7 Take a Hike

Most visitors enjoy the one-third-mile loop Old Oak Trail which starts at the nature center. Seasonal trail guides note points of interest and our free Discovery Bags provide hands-on trailside activities for young children. Additional trails to the two creeks in Annandale District Park cover approximately two miles.

Or take a drive...There are numerous nature and history van trips throughout the year. Travel the hills of Warrenton to follow the adventures of Confederate John S. Mosby or travel to Delaware to view shorebirds. Early birds can enjoy a free Monday morning bird walk at Eakin Community Park in Fairfax to peek at songbirds, blue-birds, owls and more.

Hidden Oaks' programs and van trips are detailed in *Parktakes* and on Hidden Oaks' website (listed below).

8 Discover Cultural History, Too

Included inside Annandale District Park are some of the remains of the Civil War-era unfinished railroad bed which was to be part of the Manassas Gap Railroad, connecting the Shenandoah region to Alexandria. In the fall, the nature center highlights the eastern woodland native peoples who lived in the area in the 1500s with crafts, lore and games.

9 Designed for Diversity

Visitors of all cultures find Hidden Oaks a welcoming, educational and enjoyable adventure. The new exhibit is visual and interactive with text available in both a Korean and a Spanish translation.



Interactive exhibits mix fun with learning at Hidden Oaks. The center also sponsors numerous nature and history van trips and programs.

10 Community — Making a Difference

With over 40 volunteers ranging in age from 10 to 85, the staff represents a range of cultures as well as ages, experiences and backgrounds. Each volunteer finds a niche as they assist the naturalists in meeting the center's dual mission of natural resource education and protection. Naturalists share the joy of nature, bringing programs to area schools and libraries.

Both as a place to relax and to educate, Hidden Oaks provides the community with a place to connect to our natural and cultural resources, and become stewards of our natural and cultural heritage, plus the opportunity to make a difference by joining Friends of Hidden Oaks Nature Center.

HOURS

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 9am-5pm.
Weekends/holidays from 12-5 pm. Jan./Feb. hours may vary.
Closed Tuesdays and Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's days.

DIRECTIONS

From the Capital Beltway, follow Little River Turnpike (Rt.236) east to first left on Hummer Road to the park entrance on the left. Main parking lot is next to the Packard Center in Annandale District Park. Handicapped access and limited parking at 7701 Royce Street entrance. Follow signs to nature center.

To Join The Friends of Hidden Oaks Nature Center
Visit www.hiddenoaks.info/ or call 703-941-1065.

CAPS OFF FOR KATIE RHEUARK



Katie Rheuark and friends at the rock maple playhouse she graciously donated.

Hidden Oaks' "Top Ten" would be incomplete without remembering volunteer and friend, Katie Rheuark (1919-2004). Although physically tiny, she was a giant in spirit and vitality. Her soothing voice, with its Southern drawl, charmed callers and visitors alike. For eight years, she made a big difference at Hidden Oaks.

— Mona Enquist-Johnston,
Volunteer Interpretive Services

To volunteer at Hidden Oaks, call 703-324-8513.
For more information, please call 703-941-1065, TTY 703-324-3988
or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/nature.htm



We all travel the milky way together, trees and men; but it never occurred to me until this stormday, while swinging in the wind, that trees are travelers, in the ordinary sense. They make many journeys, not extensive ones, it is true; but our own little journeys, away and back again, are only little more than tree-wavings — many of them not so much.

*When the storm began to abate, I dismounted and sauntered down through the calming woods. The storm-tones died away, and, turning toward the east, I beheld the countless hosts of the forests hushed and tranquil, towering above one another on the slopes of the hills like a devout audience. The setting sun filled them with amber light, and seemed to say, while they listened, **My peace I give unto you.***

As I gazed on the impressive scene, all the so-called ruin of the storm was forgotten, and never before did these noble woods appear so fresh, so joyous, so immortal.

— From *A Wind-Storm In The Forests*
by John Muir

Champion Trees Saved by Tree Champions

By Harry Glasgow
president of the Federation of Friends Groups

Along the northern edge of Huntley Meadows are two champion trees. These trees, swamp chestnut oaks (*Quercus michauxii*) are estimated to be about 200 years old. They are enormous, the largest being over 16 feet in circumference and over 75 feet high. The effort to save these majestic trees began over a year ago.

The Friends of Huntley Meadows became aware of these trees in early 2003 and learned that they desperately needed some attention by professional arborists. In partnership with our sister organization, the Friends of Historic Huntley (which focuses on cultural history and the historic Huntley House), we sought grants to rescue a precious bit of our heritage—these champion trees. We succeeded when our grant to the Virginia Department of Forestry's Urban and Community Forestry program was approved. Coupled with several private donations, we could proceed.

We selected two companies in the area to do the work, Growing Tree Professional Tree Care, Inc. of Ashburn and Bartlett Tree Experts of Springfield. Each company worked in one tree, and the work was completed in about six hours. The Fairfax County Urban Forestry Division helped to coordinate and supervise the project.

The work took place on May 26th. Throughout the day, the climbers exchanged shouts of encouragement and kept up the kidding, turning the experience into great fun. Those on the ground watched enviously as the climbers swung through the trees and shouted the arborist's warning, **HEADACHE!**, as they dropped cut limbs. We all helped drag the branches to be turned into fragrant wood chips by Growing Earth's chipper machine. We left the chips with the adjacent Frog Pond Early Learning Center as thanks for allowing us to use their property to access the trees.

Division of Urban Forestry arborists inspected both live and dead branches for signs of disease and infestation, and the general health of both trees. Both passed with flying colors and we all have been impressed with the vigor of new growth these 200-year-old giants produced. Opinions were fairly universal: barring any accidents, these trees have at least another 100 years in them, if not more.

When it was done, and all the equipment had been packed away, pictures had been taken, handshakes all around, and the trucks pulled away, I stood for a while, alone with trees. Now, I'm a practical man and I don't buy into humanizing inanimate objects, but I'm fairly certain that as I started to walk away, the light breeze passing through the freshly trimmed branches seemed to whisper, ever so faintly, *thank you*.



A successful collaboration of Friends Groups helped to save two 200-year-old swamp chestnut oaks at Huntley Meadows.

VOLUNTEER WISH LIST

All of our nature centers and historic sites have an ongoing need for volunteers. **GET STARTED** by calling your closest site directly (see p.2), or contact erin.chernisky@fairfaxcounty.gov (703-324-8750).

- Frying Pan Farm Park needs hayride drivers and farm house docents from 10 am to noon on weekdays.
- The lovely Walney Visitor Center at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park needs weekend VODs (that's Volunteers On Duty).
- Busy-as-ever Sully Historic Site is looking for house docents and teaching docents, including youth volunteers.
- Bird and critter haven Huntley Meadows Park needs VODs for the following shifts: (1) Two Thursday afternoons per month, from 1-5 pm.; (2) Twice a month, do a four-hr weekend shift during September/October (when things are hoppin' and flying); (3) Over the winter, volunteer for a monthly five-hour shift from November to March.
- Fall is a beautiful time to volunteer at Colvin Run Mill, currently in need of weekend docents.
- Cultural Resource Protection/Archaeology volunteers are needed for all sorts of new projects.

Historic Property Rentals continued from page 5

HUNTER HOUSE in Vienna

A Civil War Family and "Virginia Maid" Wine

From 1921 to 1940 the property was home to the family of William Davidson, the son of a Civil War hero and a close friend of then-Governor George Parry. They operated a fruit orchard and after Prohibition, in 1933, a winery. The winery was bonded as Distillery No. 4 of the Commonwealth of Virginia and produced a wine called "Virginia Maid." Some of the imported grapevine stock, now gone wild, can still be found at the front woodland edges of Nottoway Park. The property was purchased by the Park Authority in 1972, and renamed the Hunter House after its original owner, John C. Hunter, who built this gracious home-stead in 1890.



GREAT FALLS GRANGE in Great Falls

Hailing the Grange Movement in Craftsman's Style

The Great Falls Grange is the last standing unaltered grange hall in Virginia. Built in 1929 for \$12,500 as Grange Hall #738 for the Great Falls Chapter of the Fraternal Order of Husbandry, this Craftsman's style public assembly hall has hosted ice cream socials, dances, carnivals, theatrical productions and political events. A product of the Grange Movement that swept rural America 100 years ago, it was built as a symbol of commitment to community involvement, education and social progress.



CLARK HOUSE in Annandale

Farmhouse Prosperity

The Clark House was built in 1902 by local builder Henry Manchester, who was paid two dollars a day plus his dinner. It is the last surviving architectural remnant of a large dairy farm that operated in Annandale for over 50 years. Four generations of Clarks lived on the 200+ acre farm, until the bulk of the property was sold to a developer in the 1950s.

The house was built with four equally sized walls, representative of the "four-square" vernacular architecture common to farmhouses at the turn of the century. The Clark home had one of the first telephones in the area, installed around 1918.



THE OLD FORESTVILLE SCHOOLHOUSE in Great Falls

The Old Schoolhouse is next door to Great Falls Grange. The one-room, wood-stove-heated, Forestville schoolhouse opened in November, 1889. The first school teacher was Henry Cornwell who taught, it was said, *to the tune of the hickory stick*.

From the Ground Up: *The Sully Slave Quarter*

By Tammy Loxton, Historian, Sully Historic Site

The Sully Slave Quarter: From the Ground Up is an award-winning video produced in-house by Park Authority staff. Released less than a year ago, the video has already received the 2004 RMD Stewardship Award and recently received the 2004 National Association of Counties special achievement award.

Sully's heritage interpreters have long told the story of the site's slave community. Using information from primary documents such as Lee family letters has enabled them to tell the story of not just unknown slaves, but individual accounts of Thornton, Ludwell, Eve and others. This has helped to create well-rounded school and public programs that interpret both the Lee family and the enslaved African-American community.

In 1999, after a decade of research and planning, construction began on recreating the slave quarter dwelling house on top of the original archaeological footprint from over 200 years ago. The Sully Foundation, Ltd., created to support special projects at Sully, provided the funding. The 16'x20' cabin was built by Park Authority restoration crew carpenters.

Sully's Site Manager, Carol McDonnell, knew how significant this event was. The addition of the slave quarter would give visitors to Sully a more complete picture of how the slaves lived. Furthermore, *slavery interpretation*, telling the story of slave life in an accurate and compelling way, was (and is) the focus of much discussion and study by historians and staff at historical sites and museums across the nation.

McDonnell learned the basics of videotaping and began recording the construction at Sully once a week during the 10-month construction phase. When Mark Garrah came on board as the new video manager, he at once lent his expertise and enthusiasm to McDonnell's project. Garrah visited Sully as much as possible to record programs and tours and then edited down hours of video. With the help of Daphne Hutchinson, manager of Production Services (and editor of *Parktakes*), McDonnell wrote the narrative for the documentary. She also wrote and received a grant from the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities that helped with narration



A Sully heritage interpreter tells the story of the slave community next to the recreated slave quarter house.

production costs. This involved hiring a professional to do the voice-over and renting special microphone equipment. The funding also helped with copying 100 videos for distribution.

The narrator for the video is historian Robert Watson from Williamsburg, Virginia. Watson was the site manager of the recreated slave quarter at Carter's Grove Plantation and a research consultant for the Sully slave quarter. In addition, slave music, work songs, interviews and historic photographs are also part of the documentary, which involved obtaining usage rights from many different organizations across the south.

The end result is a 41-minute video relaying a specific story of the enslaved community at Sully and their daily living space. By examining archaeological evidence, it provides information on the discovery of where about 30, maybe up to 40 enslaved men, women and children lived and worked over 200 years ago. The video also discusses the reasons for building a representative structure—for historians to study and interpret, and for future generations to learn from and participate in public programming. The video is being shown in museums and schools with the hopes of promoting more interest in interpreting slave life. As word spreads, requests for the video have come in from as far away as Texas.

This video project is also a way to promote stewardship of the county's heritage within the Park Authority and in the community, and maintain the highest professional standards of preservation and interpretation in African-American history.

If you are interested in presenting ***Sully Slave Quarter: From the Ground Up*** at your museum, site or school, please email Tammy Loxton at tammy.loxton@fairfaxcounty.gov or call 703-437-1794. There is a minimal charge for shipping and handling.



County Almanac Highlights Natural Events for Fall 2004

From Notes at Hidden Pond Nature Center

To see the full County Almanac, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resources

SEPTEMBER

1ST WEEK We now lose daylight at a rate of 20 minutes per week. Ripeness is everywhere. Blindfolded, by smell alone we could tell what time of year it is.

2ND WEEK Spiders are big and fat now. So is almost everything else. Wildlife populations are now at their peak. Oaks drop their acorns. Monarch butterflies pass through on their way to Mexico.



3RD WEEK Autumn equinox September 22 — Sun rises due east and sets due west. Nights are now longer than days. This shortening of the photo-period is the trigger for many changes in the natural world; fall colors, migration, changes in plumage, appetite, etc.

4TH WEEK Full "Harvest" moon September 28. Beech nuts fall — turkeys gobble them up and then roost for the night in nearby trees. Dogwood berries now red and the buds which hold next year's blossoms are now set.

OCTOBER

1ST WEEK Look for fall butterflies such as the buckeye which has distinctive eye spots on their fore and hind wings. Snakes search for winter shelter.

2ND WEEK Young mockingbirds practice their repertoire; they seem uncertain and sort of murmur the calls of other birds to themselves. Fall honeysuckle fragrant. Witch hazel, the last tree to flower, now in bloom.

3RD WEEK The reddest leaves of the forest belong to the black gum tree. Red maples are also red with patches of yellow and green. Hickories and tulip poplars turn yellow, and the oaks turn a dark burgundy or brown. White pines drop brown needles (needles that were new a year and a half ago). Persimmon fruit may be ripe.

4TH WEEK Full "Hunter" moon October 27. Grass stops growing. A few crickets and grasshoppers buzz in a melancholy way. The last weekend marks the end of daylight savings but the natural world will take no notice.



NOVEMBER

1ST WEEK Most deciduous trees become bare, except for the young American beech tree whose light brown leaves will persist throughout the winter. Listen for the arrival of the white-throated sparrow.

2ND WEEK Busy beavers store succulent saplings for the winter. Juncos arrive. Seeds of tulip poplars are carried by the wind, looking like little helicopters.



3RD WEEK Camel crickets — those pale, creepy, jumping things — crowd our basements and garages. Most leaves are usually down by now and the woods look gray. The squirrels and deer accordingly change their fur from their summer appearance which has brown highlights to winter coats which are mostly gray.

4TH WEEK Full "Frost" moon November 26. Willow leaves are last to turn. A hard freeze this time of year in the 18th century would have made roads much more passable; mud being easier to walk on when it's frozen. Nature now seems prepared for winter.

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Welcome to ResOURces Online

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/resources

Our newly renovated website, representing the Resource Management Division (RMD) of the Park Authority and ResOURces newsletter is now online and ready for you.

On the website, you can learn more about RMD's work to protect, preserve and interpret Fairfax County's natural and cultural heritage. You can **Visit the Sites** to see the county's beautiful nature centers and historical sites, or stop by the charming **Rental Properties** to plan your next special event. One of our many new features is **Who Do You Call?** for concerns about encroachment, wildlife, county artifacts and more. In **Nature Finder**, find out where to see county birds and flora, visit the **Wildflowers**, or check the **Almanac** for natural and astronomical events. Past issues are available for ResOURces newsletter, along with dozens of articles about county nature, history and horticulture in the **Articles Index**.

NATURE QUESTS

Eco-Adventure

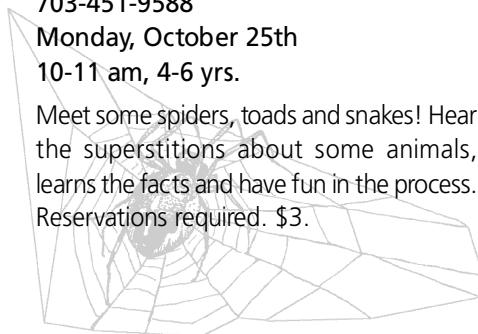
ELLANOR C. LAWRENCE PARK
703-631-0013
Saturday, October 2nd
1-3pm, 7 yrs. and up.

Learn about the simple things we can do to protect our environment. Make some "trashy" art, complete group projects outdoors and indoors, and plant new trees. (*The Junior Girl Scout ecology badge requirements will be covered.*) Reservations required. \$6.

Creepy Creatures

HIDDEN POND NATURE CENTER
703-451-9588
Monday, October 25th
10-11 am, 4-6 yrs.

Meet some spiders, toads and snakes! Hear the superstitions about some animals, learns the facts and have fun in the process. Reservations required. \$3.



Geology on the Potomac Gorge

RIVERBEND NATURE CENTER
703-759-9018
Friday, November 29th
8am-3pm, 15 years and up.

Explore the unique geology of the Potomac Gorge along the river. Reservation/advanced payment required by October 29. \$20.



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